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Operational activities for development: South-South cooperation for development

State of South-South cooperation

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/244, assesses the concrete measures taken by the United Nations development system to improve its support to South-South cooperation initiatives at the national, regional and global levels over the reporting period (2016/17). In addition, it highlights a number of actions taken by the United Nations development system to further institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation in its operational activities towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report concludes with recommendations on the way forward.

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I. Background

1. The world has envisioned a future free of poverty through the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2017, a review of progress shows that in many areas it is uneven and slower than what is needed to meet the targets. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for partnerships, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, as important means of implementation. South-South cooperation, as a complement to but not a substitute for North-South cooperation, offers enormous opportunities and potential to support accelerating progress towards achieving the Goals.

2. In recent years, the scope of South-South cooperation has expanded well beyond technical cooperation and exchange of knowledge to include trade, investment, infrastructure and connectivity as well as coordination of policies and development strategies among developing countries. South-South cooperation has also become more visible in regional and global development discourse and initiatives.

3. New South-South cooperation initiatives in infrastructure are increasingly facilitating regional, subregional and interregional integration, providing innovative approaches for collective actions. In parts of Africa, including West and sub-Saharan Africa, infrastructure projects involving groups of States are being implemented.

4. India has substantially increased its support to capacity development in Africa; new initiatives, such as Made in India, Digital India and smart cities, offer opportunities to broaden its cooperation with partner countries. India has also announced a $10 billion concessional line of credit to Africa over the next five years, as well as grant assistance of $600 million that would include an India-Africa Development Fund of $100 million, an India-Africa Health Fund of $10 million, and 50,000 scholarships for African students over the same period.[1]

5. The Belt and Road Initiative championed by China, with over 100 countries expressing interest in partnership, will provide new opportunities and impetus for international collaboration, including South-South cooperation. The initiative focuses on promoting policy coordination, connectivity of infrastructure and facilities, unimpeded trade, financial integration and closer people-to-people ties.

6. The increasing momentum of South-South cooperation needs to be supported by strengthened institutionalization of collaborative efforts. In the past few years, three aspects of the institutionalization of South-South cooperation are particularly salient. First, the development of formal rules, informal norms and dedicated organizations have moved South-South cooperation increasingly into the mainstream of policymaking at the national level. A growing number of countries have either created agencies dedicated to South-South cooperation, such as the emerging South African Development Partnership Agency and the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning, or have boosted South-South cooperation capacities within institutions dealing with international cooperation. Institutional advances include the allocation of dedicated financial resources; development of policy and regulatory frameworks; specialized personnel; and administrative and methodological innovations. These advancements have also helped the United Nations country teams to strengthen their engagement with host Governments on South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

[1] Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.17.I.5).

7. Second, there is an ongoing expansion of the number of actors, including subnational entities such as municipal and provincial governments and non-State actors such as civil society, private sector firms, volunteer groups, and academic and research institutions, engaging in South-South cooperation as part of their core activities. Decentralized South-South cooperation has become more formalized.

8. Third, there is a new wave of multilateral institutions devoted to South-South cooperation, especially the financing of these activities. This is reflected in the establishment of new multilateral financial institutions, such as the recently established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank. Both are significant avenues for South-South cooperation, prioritizing sustainability and inclusive growth in their respective agendas. AIIB is projected to provide loans of $10 billion to $15 billion annually over the next 15 years. Those investments will focus on the development of infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia. The New Development Bank is estimated to have the ability to lend an average of $3.4 billion by 2020 and almost $9 billion by 2034. The Bank's first five pipeline projects will focus on renewable energy.[2]

9. This trend of institutionalizing South-South cooperation is driven by several factors. First, organizational learning by existing South-South cooperation institutions has deepened as many partners accumulate concrete experiences and expand their cooperation portfolios. Such learning includes new institutional knowledge and practices ranging from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation as well as impact assessment of South-South cooperation initiatives. Increasingly, these South-South flows of knowledge occur as a result of deliberate and well-designed mechanisms to foster cross-institutional learning. Regional and global networks of learning on South-South cooperation are emerging. These networks include not only platforms created by Southern partners but also forums convened by traditional development providers in triangular cooperation partnerships.

10. Second, many actors are more formally defining their comparative advantages and specific spaces in South-South cooperation. For example, Brazil, Indonesia and Turkey engage in areas of South-South cooperation to which they bring particular expertise and capacity, such as entrepreneurial education, tropical agriculture, or disaster prevention and response, while Cuba and Nigeria put great emphasis on technical cooperation initiatives. Through this specialization, these countries are able to draw on their unique experiences, which add greater value to development initiatives.

11. Third, there is a growing global community of specialized development professionals working on South-South cooperation, especially from the global South. Universities and think tanks have created South-South cooperation programmes, research, courses, and publications on the subject. Labour unions, non-governmental organizations and volunteer associations have also begun to engage in South-South cooperation whether through bilateral channels or multilaterally.

II. State of support of the United Nations development system to South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

12. In 2016, the United Nations system strengthened its institutional support for South-South cooperation. United Nations agencies took a series of measures to further mainstream South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into their

[2] United Nations Development Programme, "Scaling-up South-South cooperation for sustainable development", December 2016.

policy frameworks and corporate strategies towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. South-South cooperation now frequently appears in United Nations repositories of good practices and lessons learned and policy and programmatic instruments. Some agencies have also allocated dedicated funds and/or recruited specialists to boost their South-South cooperation initiatives not only at headquarters but, increasingly, at the country and regional levels.

A. Integration of South-South cooperation into policy frameworks and strategies

13. South-South cooperation is recognized in several strategic documents as an important modality for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The revised strategic framework, medium-term plan 2014-17 and programme of work and budget 2016-17 of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) build on its corporate strategy on South-South cooperation of 2013 and reflect South-South cooperation as a key means to deliver results. FAO biennial and regional work plans continue to mainstream South-South cooperation throughout the organization.

14. South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation are both priorities in the strategic framework 2016-2025 of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which reflects the shared understanding with member States of the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation for improving rural livelihoods. The document entitled "IFAD's approach to South-South and triangular cooperation", issued in 2016, focuses on two mutually reinforcing pillars: technical cooperation and investment promotion.

15. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) issued its first corporate strategy on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in 2016, in which it emphasizes the critical role of national capacity to engage in South-South cooperation and the importance of universal access to knowledge as a development multiplier for accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The strategy was formulated in consultation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, United Nations development agencies and a large number of Member States and was further presented to the Group of 77, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the UNDP Executive Board. It presents three service packages to enable UNDP to scale up its support, namely (a) a global development solution exchange for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation (SSMart for Sustainable Development Goals); (b) research-informed support to global dialogues as well as system coordination and collaboration; and (c) creation of an enabling environment for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation at the country and regional levels. Implementation of the strategy is being conducted jointly by UNDP and the Office for South-South Cooperation.

16. Many of the strategic frameworks launched since July 2016 focus on the role of South-South cooperation in promoting knowledge-sharing and supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level. In 2017, for example, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) approved a new corporate strategy for South-South and triangular cooperation containing a vision and an operational basis for scaling up the use of South-South and triangular cooperation to help in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 at the national level. In addition, South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation have been incorporated into the new UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-2021, and are reflected in the new global and regional interventions action plans. In another example, the new

operational strategy for South-South and triangular industrial cooperation of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) envisions the operationalization of South-South and triangular industrial cooperation in a way that will facilitate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 9.

17. Some agencies have highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation at the country level. In its new strategic plan, 2018-2021, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) committed itself to promoting cooperation, sharing lessons learned, and fostering innovation and partnerships through South-South and triangular cooperation. A guidance note on South-South cooperation intended for UNICEF country offices, prepared in 2017, provides a framework and strategic direction for UNICEF engagement in South-South cooperation. In addition, in 2016, 74 per cent of all new country programme documents approved by the UNICEF Executive Board reflected South-South cooperation as an implementation strategy or approach. Similarly, UNDP committed itself in its strategic plan (2014-2017) to becoming the global operational arm for South-South cooperation and, to this end, in its strategy, all service offers provide opportunities for the United Nations development system to engage in country support for South-South cooperation. Among programme and project management corporate requirements the use of South-South cooperation is a quality standard.

18. A number of strategic frameworks draw on lessons learned from past experiences with South-South cooperation. The first UNIDO operational strategy for South-South and triangular industrial cooperation, launched in February 2016, takes into consideration the fact that the past experiences of UNIDO in South-South and triangular cooperation have had varying impact. Accordingly, it contains an analysis of how UNIDO can best make use of its available resources and looks at the potential of the organization to provide internal and external clients with services related to South-South and triangular industrial cooperation more effectively and efficiently.

19. Certain strategic frameworks underscore the role of technical assistance and partnership strategy in South-South cooperation. The World Food Programme (WFP) strategic plan (2017-2021) features South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as two of the WFP means of implementation, recognizing their importance for technical assistance and partnership strategies. The programme and budget of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) underlines the key role of South-South cooperation in strengthening the partnership among developing countries for the use of the intellectual property system to support innovation and creativity in order to address their specific level of development and economic circumstances.

20. In some United Nations organizations, both programmes and budgets highlight the role of South-South cooperation. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in its medium-term strategy for 2014-2021 and its programme and budget for 2014-2017, recognizes South-South cooperation as a key implementation modality for UNESCO programmes. South-South cooperation is also a significant element of the UNESCO operational strategy for its "Priority Africa" programme (2014-2021), its comprehensive partnership strategy and its Education 2030 Framework for Action, which aims to support countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, on education, and its related targets. At the World Health Organization (WHO), South-South cooperation has been incorporated into the programme budget 2018-2019 recently adopted by the 70th World Health Assembly.

21. Several agencies have also either created or strengthened dedicated South-South cooperation units or recruited specialized staff. The FAO South-South

Cooperation Strategy, for instance, is governed and progress is reviewed by the FAO Corporate Programmes Monitoring Board. In addition, the FAO South-South Cooperation and Resource Mobilization Division at its headquarters and South-South cooperation officers in the regions provide support to initiate and implement South-South cooperation initiatives throughout FAO. South-South cooperation is also actively promoted at the country level through country programming frameworks. At the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), South-South cooperation is now a central responsibility in the terms of reference of a number of staff members throughout its secretariat

22. WIPO created a special focal point, with dedicated human resources, which ensures coherent planning and regular reporting on South-South cooperation throughout the organization and provides an institutional interface with internal and external stakeholders. This is a result of discussion at the level of the WIPO governance architecture including the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property, comprising Member States and open to observers.

23. Certain agencies have begun establishing what proportions of their programmes are to be allocated to South-South cooperation. For instance, under the IFAD tenth replenishment period (2016-2018), the Fund agreed to ensure that 50 per cent of all new strategies developed during the period should include a coherent approach to South-South and triangular cooperation.

B. Actions taken by the United Nations development system to strengthen support to South-South and triangular cooperation

Policy dialogue and development

24. The United Nations system has continued to engage in South-South cooperation policy development through individual agencies and via partnerships within the system and with external actors. One key component of this trend is policy dialogues that either focus specifically on South-South cooperation or incorporate it throughout events and publications. These initiatives contribute to the institutionalization of South-South cooperation in the United Nations development system by deepening existing policy discussions, by exploring new directions, concepts and potential partnerships, and by informing the development of coherent policies.

25. Some of the dialogues organized over the reporting period have promoted regional integration. In 2016, FAO organized regional conferences for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Near East. All of those events featured South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation on the agenda and had side events with a specific regional focus on South-South cooperation. IFAD devoted attention to promoting policy dialogue through South-South and triangular cooperation, especially in the Southern Common Market region via the dedicated Special Meeting on Family Farming platform, which enables producers and their organizations to dialogue with Governments and others on critical issues relating to family farming.

26. In April 2016, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organized an expert meeting on enhancing economic cooperation and integration among developing countries, with a focus on industrial transformation, structural change and macroeconomic policy coordination. The meeting identified the conditions under which trade could become an engine of growth in the process of regional integration.

27. Some of the dialogues have promoted exchanges among different categories of stakeholders, including fostering partnerships with private sector actors and civil society entities. In June 2016, for example, UNAIDS convened a high level dialogue at the United Nations to discuss a new development paradigm on local pharmaceutical production of antiretroviral drugs and other essential medicines. The event brought together representatives of West and Central African countries, Indian and African pharmaceuticals, civil society and the private sector of the United States of America. Following up the event, the representatives of the philanthropy and private sector in the United States undertook a trade mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Kenya to identify new business ventures.

28. Other dialogues have promoted partnerships with external research institutions. In 2016, on the sidelines of the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, UNDP joined forces with the Peking University Centre for New Structural Economics (CNSE) to hold a special event on economic transformation and South-South cooperation. That event facilitated the launch of the Global Research Consortium on Economic Structural Transformation, chaired by CNSE and co-chaired by the African Center for Economic Transformation and the International Food Policy Research Institute, in partnership with UNDP and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, to advance research on economic structural transformation.

29. Some agencies have dedicated efforts to reaching a specific category of stakeholder, such as youth, through their South-South cooperation initiatives. During the Global South-South Development Expo 2016, for instance, UNFPA hosted a solution forum on reaping the potential of young people in the global South. The session enabled discussion about concrete policies, programmes and initiatives that contribute to harnessing the demographic dividend and how South-South and triangular pathways can help to maximize solutions among countries.

30. Given the increasing importance of South-South cooperation in intellectual property matters, Member States requested the WIPO secretariat to prepare an annual mapping of the South-South cooperation activities facilitated by WIPO. The presentation of the mapping enabled multi-stakeholder discussion, with the support of concrete data and statistics, of the ways and areas in which South-South cooperation was being channelled and implemented for the purpose of using the intellectual property system for development.

31. During a side event at the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) Partnerships Forum 2016, UNV and the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation announced their partnership in a project entitled "Strengthening China's involvement in the development of international volunteer service through South-South cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative". The three-year project aims to strengthen the engagement of middle-income-country actors in volunteerism.

Research and analysis

32. Evidence-based research has informed the contribution of South-South cooperation to the United Nations development system. In 2016 and 2017, FAO launched several new studies of South-South cooperation, including studies on the experience of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) in the development of nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes (March 2017) and a pamphlet entitled "How to engage in South-South and triangular cooperation" (March 2016).

33. United Nations research on emerging South-South cooperation institutions and changing development regimes has also expanded. In 2016 and 2017, UNCTAD released several publications on topics ranging from the role of development banks

in promoting growth and sustainable development to trade liberalization in Africa. UNCTAD is also preparing a report on the economic aspects of South-South cooperation at the request of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in honour of its fiftieth anniversary.

34. Some agencies published regionally focused reports on South-South cooperation. UNDP partnered with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation on two regional reports on the value addition of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in achieving sustainable human development in the Arab States and the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) regions. UNDP has also undertaken numerous efforts in developing research and analytical work on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation that aims to contribute greatly to policy dialogues and development in strategic areas relating to sustainable development. For example, UNDP, jointly with think tanks from the South, produced four analytical research papers that explore the potential contribution of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. WFP publications included a report on South-South good practices to overcome malnutrition, which resulted from a regional meeting on nutrition organized by WFP in Ecuador, and a study entitled "The cost of the double burden of malnutrition" undertaken by WFP and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to develop an analytical framework that could be applied throughout the region and beyond.

35. Another noteworthy regional effort in research and analysis was the set of reports on South-South cooperation published by UNICEF in 2016 and 2017. Five publications resulted from the third High-level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific. In addition to the summary report on the meeting, entitled "A billion brains: smarter children, healthier economies", UNICEF issued a progress report entitled "South-South cooperation in Asia for child rights: documenting high-level meetings and their contribution to building a bright future for Asia" and three thematic papers.

36. Some agencies have used case studies to explore lessons learned through South-South cooperation. Among its publications in 2016 and 2017, WFP released "South-South and triangular cooperation for food security and nutrition: snapshot of WFP practices in facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation to promote progress towards Zero Hunger (SDG 2)". Seven case studies explore how different South-South cooperation modalities are being applied in WFP work, including knowledge-sharing, technical cooperation, policy advocacy, mobilization of in-kind and cash-based support, and regional collective action.

Capacity development

37. United Nations agencies have invested considerably in enhancing capacity development for South-South cooperation. Some agencies have developed guidelines and e-learning tools. FAO, for example, strengthened its guidelines alongside capacity support tools such as training sessions and an e-learning tool for FAO staff members. For newer and more flexible South-South cooperation modalities, such as short-term exchanges of expertise and access to technical education training courses, FAO also developed or modified new guidelines and standard agreements. The Sustainable Development Goals Fund collaborated with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research in developing an online tool for business and Governments that supports capacity-building to strengthen public-private sector partnerships in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The course has been actively promoted among business leaders and Governments of the global South.

38. Other agencies created new training mechanisms, such as academies and virtual institutes. In July 2016, the International Labour Organization (ILO) organized the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Academy, an interregional learning and networking event bringing together policymakers, promoters, practitioners and researchers from around the world. The Academy established a learning space that supports ILO staff and partners in accessing tools and methodologies for the implementation of new South-South and triangular cooperation projects. The initiative has also enabled ILO staff and partners to follow up on their learning experience regarding South-South and triangular cooperation by exchanging experiences and deepening knowledge through the "virtual meeting point for South-South and triangular cooperation".

39. The UNCTAD Virtual Institute, a dedicated platform for capacity-building of academic institutions in developing countries, developed a curriculum on industrialization and growth that emphasizes South-South and regional cooperation as a vehicle for development. In addition, UNCTAD staff regularly lend their expertise to a range of initiatives and programmes in developing countries much of which is focused on trade and industrial transformation. For instance, in February 2016, UNCTAD staff delivered a workshop on industrial transformation and industrial policy in Dar es Salaam for Tanzanian researchers and government officials.

40. Another type of experience in capacity-building has involved pilot projects in volunteerism. The UNV Regional Office in the Latin America and the Caribbean region and the UNDP Regional Hub for that region designed a pilot South-South cooperation mechanism to facilitate exchanges of experts and youth for the region.

41. Some recent efforts have been geared to supporting countries in the implementation of national plans, strategies and capacities. UNDP provided assistance to Southern partners in tackling policies, laws and regulations that are hindering their engagement in South-South cooperation. In one example, it provided advice on capacity-building to the Government of Thailand in order to strengthen its South-South cooperation mechanisms and enable the country to play a leading role in the Asia and the Pacific region and beyond. In Egypt, UNDP provided support to the Cairo Centre for Training in Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa to build African capacities in peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict resolution and promote dialogue to counter extremism. The Centre has provided training to over 223 participants from more than 40 countries.

42. In 2016, WIPO implemented 40 technical assistance initiatives. The initiatives covered a wide range of activities, including the creation of forum and policy dialogue meetings for policymakers; the organization of awareness-raising and training programmes and campaigns on intellectual property administration and the building of respect; academic support for the inclusion of intellectual property curricula and expertise in higher education programmes (master's programmes, summer schools) offered by universities in developing countries; the design of training programmes on intellectual property management for small and medium-sized enterprises, innovators and creators; and the strengthening of information technology systems and databases for the administration of intellectual property rights.

Knowledge-sharing

43. United Nations agencies have created new platforms and repositories of good practices for knowledge-sharing. FAO has built on its South-South networking platform, the South-South Cooperation Gateway, which currently has information on 11 countries (Argentina, Chile, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel,

Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Namibia, Peru, Senegal and Uruguay) and 35 institutions. Institutions are put forward by Governments, with profiles of key areas of expertise and links to their web sites for further information. In some cases, rosters of experts are also provided. The platform has a space for collaboration among South-South cooperation partners.

44. IFAD has launched a web platform to showcase rural development solutions. It will serve as a portal for promoting innovative rural development solutions and information as well as the associated uptake, transfer of technologies and financing opportunities. The purpose of this initiative is to collect, aggregate and showcase successful and innovative South-South and triangular cooperation solutions originating from IFAD loans and grants. The Sustainable Development Goals Fund also launched an online library of good practices and lessons learned regarding the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.

45. The UNEVOC Network, an exclusive global platform for technical and vocational education and training, has been developed by UNESCO to further promote South-South and North-South-South cooperation. The Network has been instrumental in the production and dissemination of research, case studies, databases and publications.

46. Some of the new platforms are regionally oriented. ILO has built up the virtual platform of the Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative, including a tool that maps the South-South cooperation capacities of each country. The tool is designed specifically to enhance South-South cooperation in priority areas such as indigenous communities, youth employment, value chains, decentralization, migration and information technologies.

47. Social protection has gained prominence in United Nations research and analysis on South-South cooperation. In 2016, 80 per cent (105 out of 129) of UNICEF country offices supported South-South cooperation as part of their programmes of cooperation. Notable South-South cooperation initiatives included the Community of Practice on Cash Transfer in Africa, which facilitates knowledge exchange between policymakers of countries with full-fledged cash transfers and conditional cash transfers and/or with countries at the initial stages of development of programmes and social protection systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Related initiatives included the "South 2 South" initiative on health in Asia and the third High-level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2016.

48. Yet another innovation relates to gender-based initiatives. In 2016, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) supported national partners on gender-responsive budgeting through low-cost, targeted knowledge-exchange initiatives among countries of the global South. Those initiatives directly contributed to the revision of the budget law in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. As a follow-up to mutual and cross-regional South-South support initiatives, many countries in the Middle East and North Africa region formally committed themselves to applying gender-responsive budgeting in their respective financial and budget systems.

Partnerships and innovative financing

49. In response to Sustainable Development Goal 17 and to a fast-changing development finance landscape that includes scaling back by major traditional partners, United Nations agencies have sought innovative partnerships and financing through South-South cooperation.

50. These emerging partnerships entail a variety of mechanisms, including trust funds, seed funds and in-kind contributions. In 2016, FAO secured new commitments such as $50 million from China as well as substantial commitments from Brazil, Morocco and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Moroccan Trust Fund included donations from the private sector. In addition, new funding sources, such as the South-South Cooperation Facility for Agriculture and Food Security, supported by the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund for Food Security and guided by the principle of "Africans for Africa", began providing more flexible resources in support of intraregional South-South cooperation.

51. A number of countries, such as Israel and Singapore, began developing partnerships with FAO by providing in-kind contributions and engaging in triangular cooperation initiatives. In 2016, memorandums of understanding along similar lines were signed with China and Peru. In addition, FAO used South-South cooperation seed funds of its strategic programme to catalyse South-South cooperation partnerships at all levels, from farmer to farmer exchanges to Parliamentary Fronts against Hunger.

52. Partnerships and funding initiatives have also involved a broader range of actors. IFAD has been working with Governments, the private sector, and non-governmental and international organizations to scale up its South-South and triangular cooperation efforts. For instance, it is organizing its first international conference on South-South and triangular cooperation in November 2017 in Brasilia.

53. In 2016, WFP signed a memorandum of understanding with Argentina to promote South-South and triangular cooperation in the areas of social protection, emergencies, resilience-building and climate change, leveraging the unique experiences and skills of Argentina.

54. United Nations agencies working on health have also engaged with a broad spectrum of partners. UNAIDS began brokering a partnership between the African Development Bank, African countries, other United Nations agencies (UNIDO, WHO) and the private sector (including the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation and the Federation of African Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association) to implement the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan of Africa. Support to the Plan also included the development of an India-Africa Cooperation Framework on HIV and Health Commodity Security based on critical supporting factors, such as market intelligence, management information systems and finance.

55. Other initiatives have also incorporated civil society entities, including academic and research institutions, and development banks in promoting the Sustainable Development Goals through South-South cooperation. For instance, UNDP, under its global coalition of think tank networks for South-South cooperation entitled "South-South Global Thinkers", established partnerships with six think-tank networks from the South with which UNDP and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation will develop knowledge and research that will feed into policy dialogues on South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. UNDP also entered into partnership with the Islamic Development Bank Group to support the effective implementation and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, the Arab States, Central and South Asia, and South-East Asia and the Pacific. In addition, UNDP facilitated a $32 million partnership between Saudi Arabia (Saudi Fund for Development) and the State of Palestine to support recovery efforts in Gaza.

56. South-South partnerships have been leveraged to improve project or programme development as well as monitoring and evaluation. For example, the Malaysia-UNESCO Cooperation Programme has grown to comprise a range of

projects amounting to $5.1 million. The success of the project has led to the renewed commitment by China of an additional $4 million to be implemented in 2017 and 2018. These funds will be devoted to scaling up the previous achievements of the project.

57. In an effort to strengthen opportunities for improved synergy and alignment among the United Nations agencies with regional mandates, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia and some of its country offices are actively involved in a number of global health partnerships, such as the Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, which is a partnership among the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, China, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the WHO Regional Offices for South-East Asia and the Western Pacific.

58. At WIPO, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization and the African Intellectual Property Organization are key partners in the promotion and strengthening of the use and administration of the intellectual property systems in the region. A group of universities in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America are leading partners in the regular delivery of programmes on awareness-raising, training and education in intellectual property matters in developing countries. The Korea Invention Promotion Association jointly delivers, with WIPO and other developing-country institutions, regular programmes devoted to the promotion of innovation.

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

59. Various United Nations agencies have carried out the monitoring and evaluation of joint programmes. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals Fund undertook the monitoring and evaluation of South-South cooperation for two joint programmes in Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu. Findings confirmed that South-South cooperation between participating countries facilitates learning and strengthens technical expertise, improving the likelihood of achieving outcomes.

60. In addition, United Nations agencies have begun to incorporate monitoring and evaluation of South-South cooperation into their planning process. Under the global programming system, UNFPA is implementing, in its pilot stage (2016-2017), dedicated tagging to monitor and evaluate how South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation are being used by Member States in collaboration with UNFPA to deliver on both the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

61. The ongoing evaluation of the UNV strategic framework 2014-2017 is designed to capture lessons learned in South-South cooperation. Each project is evaluated on the basis of the respective project document for which South-South cooperation is a quality criterion. The UNV annual report also presents experiences in South-South cooperation and shares them with the wider public.

62. Certain agencies have begun to carry out external evaluations of their South-South cooperation practices. The WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil is conducting the first external evaluation of its impact and is developing a monitoring and evaluation strategy. This exercise will allow the Centre to identify mechanisms and underlying dynamics that affect programme delivery.

C. United Nations support for regional and interregional South-South cooperation

63. Since mid-2016, United Nations agencies have provided support for regional and interregional South-South cooperation through initiatives that include

organizing events such as workshops and consultations. In March 2017, for example, UNCTAD and the Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa jointly organized a regional workshop on regional value chains and policy coordination in southern Africa. This represents the first activity of a four-year UNCTAD development to enhance industrialization and productivity growth through South-South cooperation in southern Africa.

64. In addition to workshops, regional consultations have been organized to strengthen the South-South cooperation capacity of regional organizations. For instance, UNESCO is promoting regional integration through the regional consultations that it has held on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4-Education 2030 to promote South-South cooperation, including in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

65. In other instances, United Nations agencies have partnered with networks to boost their regional South-South cooperation capacity. For example, IFAD, as part of its efforts to promote regional integration by building capacity and strengthening regional organizations, has supported the activities of the Regional Programme for Rural Development Training (PROCASUR), a global organization specialized in harvesting and scaling up home-grown innovations in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

66. United Nations agencies have also provided funding for regional initiatives. IFAD co-financed the implementation of the PROCASUR learning routes programme, which reaches 15 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Currently, this "learning routes" method is being applied with the involvement of more than 170 organizations, including community organizations, government agencies and rural associations.

67. In addition to providing direct funding, United Nations agencies have helped to boost regional capacity by facilitating collaboration arrangements to overcome crises such as drug shortages. In 2016, UNAIDS supported Ghana and Senegal when they faced an acute shortage of antiretroviral drugs. It also reinforced the collaboration between the two countries by promoting the lending of antiretroviral drugs when they face shortages. Also in Africa, UNAIDS is promoting collaboration between the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States.

68. Collaboration of United Nations agencies with other institutions included partnerships with regional and subregional organizations. In 2016, UNV continued to support the African Union in the implementation of the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps. UNV and the African Union worked together to promote and operationalize the concept of youth volunteerism in advancing peace and development in Africa within the context of the African decade of youth development (2009-2019). Through technical support, UNV contributed to the ongoing efforts of the African Union to develop a youth strategic plan. It also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa towards supporting the setting-up of a regional youth internship and volunteer scheme and advancing strategies for youth programmes in the 19-member bloc.

69. WFP has also launched new initiatives in cooperation with the African Union. For instance, as a direct result of the WFP long-term support to African countries in developing home-grown school meal programmes, especially through the work of the WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger in Brazil, in January 2016, the African Union adopted home-grown school meal programmes as a continental strategy to enhance access to education and boost income-generation in rural communities.

70. As part of its technical cooperation programme, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has provided support to several of the subregional integration mechanisms of the region and dedicates 7 per cent of its regular budget to this level of technical cooperation, according to the PAHO regional programme budget policy. During 2016, several activities involving two or more of the subregional integration mechanisms were carried out. For instance, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia forged partnerships with two intergovernmental bodies in the Asia-Pacific: the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and ASEAN. The WHO Regional Offices for South-East Asia and the Western Pacific signed a memorandum of understanding with ASEAN in 2015.

71. During 2016/17, WIPO implemented several programmes and activities aimed at supporting regional initiatives to streamline and improve the efficiency standards of intellectual property administration and services and at leveraging innovation and creativity through the strategic use of the intellectual property system. Several regional organizations were part of the regular programmes: the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization; the African Organization of Intellectual Property; ASEAN; the Caribbean Community; the Caribbean Forum of African, Caribbean and Pacific States; the Latin America Blind Union; SAARC; the Southern African Development Community; and the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration.

72. The United Nations development system has also promoted regional South-South cooperation networks. Under the UN-Women "Spring forward for women" project, a regional forum of the Arab Women Parliamentarians Network for Equality (Ra'idat) was held in Morocco. More than 135 former and current women parliamentarians as well as political experts, government representatives, media professionals, and representatives of regional and international organizations, including the League of Arab States, attended the forum. The women parliamentarians from the region issued a declaration, the Declaration of Rabat, to affirm the requirements for supporting women's political participation.

73. In Asia, UNDP supported ASEAN countries in developing a disaster recovery reference guide that will improve disaster resilience and contribute to sustainable development. In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, UNDP worked in collaboration with FAO and the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation to launch the Mesoamerican Virtual Centre of Excellence in Forest Monitoring. In Asia, UNDP convened the first regional Sustainable Development Goals knowledge-sharing forum among Southern countries, which brought together policymakers from over 20 countries to share their experiences in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

74. The work of regional commissions has become crucial to the institutionalization of South-South cooperation at the regional and subregional levels. Several commissions, including the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) have integrated the modality into their strategic frameworks and work plans. At the seventy-third session of ESCAP, held in 2017, member States endorsed a regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda, which calls for enhanced technical cooperation on the means of implementation including finance and North-South, South-South, international and regional partnerships, among others. At its thirty-sixth session, in May 2016, ECLAC adopted a resolution on action lines for the period 2016-2018 to share methodologies and metrics and promote multi-stakeholder partnerships for South-South cooperation, among others. South-South cooperation underpins a significant portion of ESCAP capacity-building activities, policy dialogues, sharing of experiences, good practices, and

cross-fertilization of innovative ideas. In another example, ESCWA has supported the creation of a network of national Green Help Desks as well as a network of national technology transfer offices.

75. As secretariat for the United Nations monitoring mechanism, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa improved monitoring of the implementation of commitments made towards the development of Africa. In addition, to fulfil the mandate of the monitoring mechanism and deliver on this aspect of its strategic framework, the Office monitored and reported on the implementation of, inter alia, commitments made by traditional development partners of Africa as well as those made by its new and emerging South-South development partners.

III. Coordination and coherence of United Nations development system support to South-South cooperation

76. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation relied on three key mechanisms to promote stronger coordination of United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation. These include catalysing advocacy and dialogues through regional and global events; promoting research and knowledge-sharing of South-South cooperation, especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals; and launching or deepening partnerships, including through financing mechanisms such as trust funds.

77. The Office for South-South Cooperation has continued to provide platforms to facilitate advocacy and policy dialogues among South-South cooperation actors, engaging in strong partnerships with United Nations organizations. The Global South-South Development Expo 2016 was hosted by the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, on behalf of the Government of the United Arab Emirates, in close coordination with the Office for South-South Cooperation and in conjunction with more than 25 United Nations entities and 124 other intergovernmental organizations and institutional partners. Approximately 700 representatives from more than 90 countries took part in that Expo. The High-level Directors General Forum, which has been a feature of the Expo since 2008, covered a range of topics and experiences relating to institutionalizing South-South cooperation within efforts towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. They included incorporating South-South cooperation into national development plans, improving the measurement of South-South cooperation, and strengthening capacity development in the management of South-South and triangular cooperation. The Expo enabled the sharing and discussion of more than 170 practical, home-grown Southern development solutions. In addition, close to 40 bilateral partnership meetings were reported during the Expo, and several memorandums of understanding and letters of intent for cooperation were signed.

78. At the regional level, during the Astana Economic Forum 2017, the Office for South-South Cooperation supported policymakers and practitioners across the Arab States region and the Europe and CIS region to discuss the role of South-South cooperation in promoting green economy in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

79. The Office for South-South Cooperation also helped to organize thematic events promoting links between South-South cooperation and the Sustainable Development Goals. For instance, in November 2016, United Nations entities including the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Office for South-South Cooperation joined the Governments of China and Morocco, with support from the Southern Climate

Partnership Incubator, to organize the High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation on Climate Change. The event promoted discussion and knowledge exchange among developing countries regarding the challenges and opportunities in the implementation stage of the 2030 Agenda.

80. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/244, decided to convene a high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The Office for South-South Cooperation will provide the substantive and secretariat support for the preparatory process of the conference, which is to be held no later than the first half of 2019, including the negotiations towards a modality resolution.

81. Aiming at being the knowledge hub on South-South cooperation, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation fostered research and analysis on South-South cooperation as well as knowledge exchanges. Jointly with UNDP, it supported the establishment of the global coalition of think tank networks for South-South cooperation entitled "South-South Global Thinkers" to develop research and share knowledge on South-South cooperation in the context of sustainable development. Six major think-tank networks in the global South, involving over 200 institutions, have formalized their membership under this initiative.

82. The Office for South-South Cooperation has launched a new web portal (www.unsouthsouth.org) designed to better engage United Nations organizations and Member States. The portal showcases the work of all partners on South-South and triangular cooperation in their respective focus areas. It functions as a tool to link agencies and Governments, share knowledge, and undertake outreach and advocacy on issues of critical importance to the South.

83. The Office for South-South Cooperation has initiated new knowledge products engaging Member States, United Nations organizations and other partners. The South-South in Action publication series is a knowledge product enjoying full ownership by developing countries and partner institutions. The first issue in the series (January 2017) focuses on the sustainable development efforts of Thailand guided by its sufficiency economy philosophy.

84. In addition, several thematic publications have been launched since July 2016. The report entitled "Catalysing the implementation of nationally determined contributions in the context of the 2030 Agenda through South-South cooperation" resulted from a joint effort by the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator. The publication suggests ways to mainstream climate action into sustainable development through the implementation of nationally determined contributions and explores how South-South cooperation can catalyse the implementation of such contributions by fostering broader partnerships and enhancing information dissemination.

85. The Office for South-South Cooperation joined forces with IFAD and the Islamic Development Bank in the project "South-South and triangular cooperation for agricultural development and enhanced food security". The partnership has led to the creation of nine "knowledge exchange corridors" among participating countries.

86. The Office for South-South Cooperation also strengthened its work in sharing knowledge for strengthening the South-South cooperation capacities of countries. For example, the Office, in partnership with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, has facilitated knowledge exchanges in management practices for South-South cooperation and enabled the development of

management tools for the design, implementation and evaluation of South-South cooperation initiatives.

87. The Office for South-South Cooperation team for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok increased research, training and knowledge exchange on South-South cooperation, with human resource support provided by the Government of Thailand. Also in the region, the Office worked with the Government of the Republic of Korea to launch the second phase of a capacity-building programme in science, technology and innovation.

88. In the Arab States region and the Europe and CIS region, the Office for South-South Cooperation implemented initiatives combining research and analysis with capacity-building and advocacy. The first Regional Networking Forum, held in Dubai in 2016, brought together development practitioners from across the region. Participants produced a joint statement for further promoting the South-South cooperation agenda and sharing knowledge in various areas, including public service, education, health, agriculture, the rule of law, customs, employment and public-private partnerships.

89. In addition, capacity-development workshops were convened in West Africa and East Africa, facilitating the sharing of experiences towards the strengthening of institutional arrangements in the management of South-South cooperation.

90. As a facilitator for innovative and strategic partnerships, the Office for South-South Cooperation has leveraged one particularly fruitful channel in the establishment of funding partnerships: the use of trust funds. For example, in June 2017, the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund was launched to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals across the global South in partnership with United Nations organizations. The Fund, which is managed by the Office, has already received $2 million in contributions from the Government of India and has approved its first project benefiting seven small island developing States in the Pacific.

91. In addition, the Office for South-South Cooperation has continued to manage a variety of other trust funds. These include the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, which received $6.3 million in contributions and implemented over $2 million through 13 global projects; the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, which received $2 million in contributions and implemented about $1.8 million through 10 projects; and the Pérez-Guerrero trust fund, which received $0.6 million in contributions and implemented $0.5 million through 27 projects.

92. In July 2017, the Office for South-South Cooperation signed an innovative partnership agreement with the Government of Honduras and the United Nations country team in Honduras. This agreement brings together the Office and 14 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, working with 22 Government of Honduras entities, to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

93. The present report notes the efforts made by the United Nations development system since July 2016 to promote and institutionalize South-South cooperation within and outside the United Nations development system. I welcome these initiatives and encourage the system to continue scaling up its support to South-South cooperation.

94. In order to achieve more coherent and coordinated support by the United Nations system, I have requested the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to coordinate, in consultation with the United Nations agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy.

95. I have also requested the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to consider commissioning an independent annual comprehensive South-South cooperation report. I have further requested the Office, supported by other United Nations entities, to conduct a mapping of major development cooperation activities led by developing countries and key South-South cooperation providers, assessing possible linkages with the 2030 Agenda and opportunities for United Nations engagement, and to do so on the basis of the mapping and reviews already conducted.

96. Consistent with the objective to accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement, I have also requested the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to develop, in close consultation with the United Nations agencies, an action plan for South-South cooperation in support of my climate change engagement strategy (2017-2021).

97. I invite specialized agencies and United Nations funds and programmes to continue mainstreaming South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into their policies and programmes by incorporating these modalities into strategic frameworks and other planning instruments, with methodologies that capture the qualitative and quantitative indicators of these partnerships.

98. I also encourage agencies to systematically track resources and dedicated staff positions devoted to South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. I commend and encourage the efforts by Member States to support the United Nations efforts in support of South-South and triangular cooperation through human resources and financing instruments such as trust funds.

99. I encourage the specialized agencies, the funds and programmes and United Nations country teams to continue the mapping and documentation of best practices in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, as well as the production and sharing of evidence-based knowledge in their areas of expertise as they relate to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

100. It is important that the United Nations development system also promote collaboration between institutions of higher education, research centres and think tanks from the global South, and support them to champion thought leadership on South-South cooperation.

101. Considering the centrality of capacity development to the work of the United Nations development system, I recommend that specialized agencies, funds and programmes within the United Nations development system continue to enhance the capacities of developing countries towards the utilization of South-South and triangular cooperation in the implementation of national development plans and strategies, including as they relate to the Sustainable Development Goals.

102. The General Assembly has proposed the convening of a high-level conference on South-South cooperation, to be held in Buenos Aires in 2019. I encourage the United Nations system to provide substantive inputs, based on evidence, to inform discussions among the Member States in preparation for the conference, through the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as conference secretariat.